



Hi-tech Designer Looks Ahead: Soybean Cashmere

Designer and self-taught high-tech fashion expert Mary Jo Matsumoto is frequently interviewed for her expertise by publications such as *US News & World Reports*, *USA Today* and *Glamour*. Her designs have been worn by celebs Robin Wright Penn and Joan Rivers, have appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and at the 2004 Oscars, and are sold at 300 boutiques worldwide.

"I draw on my favorite period, the late 1930s, and I am obsessed with updating my designs with the latest technology in fabrics," says Matsumoto of her inspiration. She is currently pursuing avenues to design a line of clothing using unusual materials, such as milk fibre and soybean cashmere. "Soybean cashmere is a combination of yarn spun literally from soybeans and cashmere. The result is a very lightweight, breathable fabric that is as soft as cashmere but much lighter and perfect for summer or for wearing on a plane. To me, it's a luxury fabric that is very practical," she says. "Soybean has also been found to boost the levels of collagen in the skin".

Similarly, scientists and chemists are also studying the effects of milk fabric, "this incredibly cool-to-the-touch, silky material". Through a new technical process, milk is dehydrated and spun into soft and silky milk yarn. Filled with amino acids that smooth and nourish the skin, not only does it feel great but women who wear the milk T-shirts claim that they help alleviate hot flashes. However, "milk tees are still in the realm of luxury goods at this point. A beautiful 100% milkcloth tee costs \$110 (R702)," says Matsumoto. For more information, visit www.maryjomatsumoto.com.

Gold beaded bolero from the Mary Jo Matsumoto collection